THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE

JAZZ INFORMATION

VOL. I, No. 13 DECEMBER 8, 1939 TEN CENTS

BOBBY MARTIN AT "THE PLACE"

Bobby Martin, American colored trumpeter who returned from a long stay in Europe recently, now has a four piece band at The Place, in Greenwich Village.

Martin, who went to Europe with Sam Wooding's orchestra in the early twenties, remained to work in England and throughout the Continent, and gained the reputation of an outstanding musician.

His band at The Place includes Richard Edwards, piano; Ural Dean, drums; and Samuel Steede, guitar.

ERSKINE HAWKINS GETS LOUIS PART

Erskine Hawkins, trumpet-playing bandleader, has been signed for the role of the Negro trumpeter in the stage adaptation of "Young Man With A Horn", Dorothy Baker's Bix novel.

The part, first assigned to Louis Armstrong, was left vacant when Armstrong joined the cast of "Swingin' The Dream".

Ella Fitzgerald will also have a speaking and singing role in the dramatization of "Rick Martin's" life.

WHO'S WHO IN SHAKESPEARE

Zutty Singleton, not Sidney Catlett, is playing drums with Bud Freeman's orchestra in "Swingin' The Dream" -- no matter what the programs and reviews say. Catlett is still playing in Armstrong's orchestra at the Cotton Club.

The Benny Goodman Sextet is expected to leave the show by the first of the year.

STACY'S LATEST RECORDING DATE

At his recording session for US November 30th, Jess Stacy made the following tunes: Breeze Blow My Baby Back To Me, A Good Man Is Hard To Find, I Can't Believe That You're In Love With Me, and a slow blues. The band included Stacy, Don Carter, Sid Weiss, Eddie Miller, Les Jenkins and Billy Butterfield.

WESTCHESTER JAM SESSIONS THROUGH

Sunday afternoon jam sessions, held at the Green Haven Inn, Mamaroneck, have been discontinued. They may be resumed soon, however, in a new location, more easily accessible from New York City.

THE BANDWAGON

New York: Pete Brown continues at the Onyx; Savoy Sultans, Billie Holiday and Harlem Highlanders at Kelly's Stable. George Auld takes Shaw's orchestra out of the Penn today, and opens a month's run at Roseland on the 15th. Jack Jenney at Loew's State until the 13th. Bob Crosby at the Flatbush Theatre, in Brooklyn, to be followed by Lucky Millinder. Claude Hopkins plays the Brooklyn Roseland December 10. Ella Fitzgerald begins a long run at the Savoy Thursday the 14th, after which she replaces Woody Herman at the Famous Door. Benny Carter plays the Century Theatre tonight and tomorrow. Tony Pastor is rehearsing his new band. Lionel Hampton will probably be doing the same shortly.

Chicago: Duke Ellington plays a one-nighter at the Blackstone Hotel December 9th. Jimmy MacPartland and Fats Waller continue at the Hotel Sherman's Panther Room until Jimmy Dorsey arrives on the 29th. Stuff Smith, playing the Off Beat Club, will give a swing concert there Sunday afternoon.

Out of town: Duke Ellington in Pittsburgh, 15th. Jimmy Dorsey into the Stanley Theatre, same city, on the 8th. Will Bradley's run at Jung Hotel, New Orleans, continues. Gene Krupa to the Southland, Boston, 11th. Ben Pollack stays at the Sherman Cafe, San Diego, through January 21st. Edgar Hayes begins a week at the Howard Theatre, Washington, on the 8th. Jimmie Lunceford plays Keith's Ballroom, Baltimore, the 10th.

Yank Lawson's place in T. Dorsey trumpet section now filled by Lee Costaldo.

Count Basie's records will move to Columbia's fifty-cent label beginning with his next batch, this month.

The fourth side made at Muggsy Spanier's recording session November 22nd was Riverboat Shuffle.

Benny Goodman finishes his Camel series on December 30th; Bob Crosby will take over the favored Saturday night spot. The National Biscuit Company may sponsor Goodman.

Joey Kearns, ex-Crosby sax man, leads the house band at WCAU, Philadelphia, after January 1st.

Life Magazine will be out on the stands December 15th with another feature page on records, including a list of the best hot jazz discs issued in 1939.

CAFE SOCIETY MONDAY JAM SESSIONS DIRECTED BY JAMES P. JOHNSON

Pianist To Lead Pick-Up Bands; Ida Cox Opens At Cafe Soon

Cafe Society's Monday night jam sessions have been revived. Resuming the successful policy of last season, the Greenwich Village spot will present a pick-up band weekly on Joe Sullivan's off night.

This year again the Monday sessions are to be directed by James P. Johnson, famous old-time pianist.

In former Cafe Society sessions Johnson has presented, on various nights, such musicians as Henry Allen, Hot Lips Page and Roy Eldridge on trumpet; J. C. Higginbotham on trombone; Edmund Hall and Benny Goodman on clarinet; Dick Wilson and Don Bias on tenor sax; Bernard Addison, Albert Casey, Pop Foster, Zutty Singleton and Sidney Catlett in the rhythm section.

Joe Sullivan's mixed band, continuing its run, is expected to see another change in personnel soon, with the addition of a colored trumpet player rumored.

Ida Cox, blues singer recently rediscovered by John Hammond, will probably join the bill at the Cafe some time this month.

JACOBSON-BROWN BAND REHEARSING

Bud Jacobson, Chicago clarinet player who recently recorded with Jimmy MacPartland for Decca's album of Chicago style, is rehearsing a band with Boyce Brown, half-blind alto saxophonist who has gained a fine reputation among musicians and critics. Brown also joined the MacPartland band for the recording date.

The new band also includes Mel Henke, ex-Steven Leonard pianist who recently made his first solo recording for the Collector's Item label; Frank Spencer, drums, and Carl Rinker, little-known trumpeter who follows the unusual style of Natty Dominique.

SBARBARO FOR SPANIER AT NICK'S

Tony Sbarbaro, original drummer of the Dixieland Jazz Band, brings an outfit under the same name into Nick's Tavern in Greenwich Village Monday, December 11. The Dixieland Band will replace Muggsy Spanier's Ragtime outfit. Rumors that Muggsy will return immediately to Chicago have not been confirmed.

JAZZ INFORMATION

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COLLECTORS' ITEMS

Here is the definite and final story of the Astoria Hot Eight, as obtained from Joseph Robichaux by our industrious friend in New Orleans, Orin Blackstone.

The Jones and Collins Astoria Hot Eight was an established band, playing at the Astoria Roof Garden in New Orleans. The band was all colored, but for their recording date they needed a good clarinet player, and the fine white musician Sidney Arodin was called in.

At a recording session in Italian Hall in New Orleans in 1929 or 1930, they cut four sides with the following personnel:

Lee Collins, cornet; Sidney Arodin, clarinet; Thad Purnell, alto sax; David Jones, tenor sax; Joseph Robichaux, piano; Rene Hall, banjo; Albert Morgan, bass; Albert Martin, drums.

The tunes recorded, all originals by the band, were "Duet Stomp" (also known as "War Clouds"), "Astoria Strut", "Damp Weather", and "Tip Easy Blues". Duet Stomp and Astoria Strut were issued on Victor V-38576, and recently reissued on Bluebird B-8168.

The other two sides, however, have never been issued; and again we ask the Victor Hot Jazz Department to consider releasing them, if they can be found. The one record by this band is extraordinary. Al Morgan, of course, is a fine bassist, and plays with great drive; Dave Jones, too, was an excellent and influential saxophonist. But the outstanding part of the disc, which makes it memorable in spite of several very sloppy and confused passages, is the grand playing of Collins and Arodin. Collins is an extraordinary cornetist, who plays on these sides with enormous gusto and fine taste, in a style closely resembling Armstrong's. His solos are truly exciting, and his ensemble swing is magnificent. Arodin, who has played much less well on other records, here displays an ideal clarinet style, combining the fluency of the New Orleans tradition with a sharp, stabbing attack which makes every note count. His work in the ensembles complements Collins admirably.

While we're on the subject of these two fine musicians, we might mention a few of their other records. Collins is to be heard, of course, on Jelly Roll Morton's The Pearls -- Beale Street Blues (Victor 20948, Bluebird B-10252), Hyena Stomp -- Billy Goat Stomp (Victor 20772), Jungle Blues (Victor 21345A, Bluebird B-10256), and Wild Man Blues (Bluebird B-10256). Also accompanied Lil Johnson on some blues records, including the fine Black And Evil Blues (C1467), Vocalion 03374. Arodin recorded with Wingy Mannone's "New Orleans Rhythm Kings" on Decca, with Monk Hazel's Bienville Roof Orchestra on Brunswick, and on Louis Prima's first Brunswicks.

* * *

John McAndrew of Brooklyn, confirming the information printed in last week's Collectors Items that Joe Venuti's Raggin' The Scale and Miff Mole's Shim-Me-Sha-Wabble are coupled on Harmony 1427-H, both under the name of the Tennessee Music Men, adds that Bugle Call Rag, on Harmony 1415-H (100598) under the same pseudonym, is the original Okeh 41410 (401958), by Eddie Lang's orchestra.

George Hoefer, Jr., writes from Chicago, agreeing with our opinion that "the only method by which an accurate and complete discography can be compiled is through the slow accumulation of data from widely separated sources." Confirming the information on Harmony 1415-H given by McAndrew, he adds that the coupling, Deep Harlem (100599), has not been identified.

Hoefer adds that on Harmony 1422-H, by the Tennessee Music Men, Baby Won't You Please Come Home (100604) is from Okeh master 401811, originally on Okeh 41286, by Frankie Trumbauer's orchestra, with Bix's "in the hat" chorus, and the vocal, by Trumbauer, credited to "Jack King". The coupling is No Trumps, which he says sounds like the same band that recorded Loveless Love, Harmony 1406-H.

"Loveless Love," Hoefer goes on, "originally appeared on Okeh 41440 by Fred Gardner's Texas University Troubadours, backed by Papa's Gone; master numbers 404099 and 404100, respectively. Gardner is credited with the tune 'No Trumps', which sounds like an arrangement of Darktown Strutters Ball. Fred Gardner's Orchestra also made No Trumps for Okeh, backed with Daniel's Blues. These sides have also turned up on Clarion.

"Another All-Star Rhythm Boys disc is Harmony 1420-H, Sensation (100601), Joe Venuti Blue Four, master 401160, Okeh 41144, backed by Choo Choo (Trumbauer's, master 404434, Okeh 41450).

"Of passing interest, you might add to Sammy Stewart's recordings, Puritan 11359-B, Copenhagen (master 1891)."

And Mr. Hoefer's letter reminds us of our own candidates for his list of "unforgettable solos". What about Johnny Dodds' clarinet, and Louis Armstrong's vocal, in Lonesome Blues, Okeh 8396?

* * *

The personnels for the Cellar Boys' Wailing Blues, and for Wingy Mannone's Trying To Stop My Crying -- Isn't There A Little Love, were incorrectly listed in the November 15 Downbeat. Art Hodes did not play piano on the first; and the tenor, on the other two sides, is not Bud Freeman, but one Snurp. This was stated in the first issue of Jazz Information, September 8.

Also according to Downbeat, Wade Foster (now with MacPartland) is "rumored" to be the clarinet on Wingy's Downright Disgusted -- Fare Thee Well (Vocalion 15728). According to Art Hodes, the disc features Wingy, Jack Gardner on piano, Gene Krupa, and Foster, whom Hodes calls one of the finest clarinets he's heard. Can anyone confirm this "rumor"?

* * *

According to Alfred Lion, guiding spirit of Blue Note Records, the personnel of Alex Hill's Orchestra on Vocalion 1465, St. James Infirmary -- South Bound, includes Hill, piano; Jabbo Smith, trumpet; Omer Simeon, clarinet; and George James, alto sax. He also has an old German record by "The New-Yorkers", an orchestra which played at the Valencia in Berlin, featuring Danny Polo on clarinet. The titles are Clarinet Marmalade and One More Night, and the record is Tri-Ergon 5136.

More information on Vance Dixon, who was mentioned in Frank Marshall Davis' letter in last week's issue, comes from Edward H. Bilderback of Woodstown, N. J., who notes two records under the name of Vance Dixon and his Pencils: Hot Peanuts -- Laughing Stomp, Columbia 14608-D, and Pete The Dealer In Meat -- Who Stole The Lock, Okeh 8891.

Did you catch Sidney Bechet, in his New Orleans Feetwarmers' Shag, Victor 24150 or Bluebird B-10022, playing the theme of "I Thought I Heard Buddy Bolden Say", almost exactly as it was recorded recently by Jelly Roll Morton?

One of the sides recorded for Pathe by Bennie Moten's orchestra has been identified, under the name

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FROM BACH TO JAZZ

by WALTER SIDNEY

Many lovers of jazz fall into the same error that those do who detest it. They agree that jazz has no connection whatsoever with what might be called the highbrow tradition of music. There is some excuse for jazz lovers, looking at the peculiar results that usually come out of the attempt to marry jazz to the highbrow tradition, such as the Gershwin concertos and "Bach Goes To Town". There is less to be said, however, for the critics who get insulted at the mention of jazz, except that they are merely running true to form. It has usually been the tradition for critics to become offended at the most vital music of their time, because it rarely sounds like something they heard before.

Jazz belongs in the main stream of great music. To find its counterpart, however, we have to go, not to the music of the last hundred and fifty years, but to the century before that: the great age of contrapuntal music, which reached its peak in the work of Johann Sebastian Bach. And the reasons for this resemblance give us a deep insight, not so much into Bach or jazz, but into the origin of all musical form.

The similarities are easy to pick out, especially if we listen to Bach in his original style and instrumentation, not in modern dressed-up arrangements (and likewise for jazz). Godd jazz has all the qualities of good contrapuntal music. It avoids rich harmonies and thick masses of sound. It is clear in texture, builds a complex pattern, yet says what it has to say as simply as possible. It loves the interplay of melodies and rhythms pulling away from each other, gives the listener constand surprises, sets off its most serious moods with a light, dancing decoration, keeps up a constant flow of ideas, and never departs from its underlying drive.

It may seem strange that the spirit of a music apparently long dead and buried should come back to life, and by what Lyle Dowling calls the "back door". It is not only strange but funny, because in our academies where the writing of music is taught, counterpoint is considered one of the most difficult and thankless of tasks for the trained composer, let alone someone who never learned to read music. But the explanation is not hard to find.

Jazz is good counterpoint because it arises from conditions which make counterpoint the most natural way of making music, just as Bach wrote counterpoint because it was the most natural way of solving the problems he had to face. And if we examine both jazz and Bach more closely, we find a kinship deeper than the superficialities of form.

Jazz is music of dance and song, made to fit people's needs for immediate entertainment and emotional expression. Yet it doesn't pick its rhythms and tunes out of the air. Its rhythms are the popular dances of today. Its best tunes are well loved melodies, some of them given names (like the St. Louis or West End Blues), others unnamed but reappearing with slight variations in hundreds of improvised solos or popular songs. These melodies, most of them dating back to the spirituals, others coming out of the more sentimental Irish ballads or popular marches, make up a genuine folk music at the heart of jazz. Like any other folk music, these melodies were hammered out by countless people, passed down from one singer or player to another, come out simple in form yet carry a profound weight of emotion. They form what might be called the musical language of jazz.

And we find the same core in the music of Bach. His lighter music was based on the popular dances of his time. Most of his religious music was based on "chorales", or hymn tunes, which themselves were originally folk tunes, popular songs, tavern ballads, and the like, known and loved by the people he wrote music for.

In writing his dance pieces, Bach would take the natural path of indicating the dance by keeping up a thumping, rhythmical theme in the bass, while the higher parts would keep up the interest by a constant flow of rhythmic and melodic variations. It was a good way to write because it kept the feeling of the dance, and yet gave the composer complete freedom of imagination. It was also easy for people to listen to, because the music they sang was also contrapuntal, written in independent parts for bass, tenor, soprano, and so on.

The jazz musicians invented the same form, for the same reasons. They wanted to keep the fundamental rhythm intact, so people could dance to it, yet keep up the interest by constant variations in the upper melodic parts, and at the same time give the musicians a chance to enjoy themselves. And it was an easy music for New Orleans people to listen to, because the spirituals and blues also had the germ of counterpoint within them, with their changing solo parts against a constant refrain or chorus.

Again, in setting his "chorales", Bach would keep the original melody almost intact, so that people could recognize it, and throw another, rhythmically contrasting melody above or below it, thus setting it off, or making it more expressive and meaningful. Or he would follow it with variations, which were really "decorations" of the original chorale, ornamentations upon it, carrying it to a cumulative climax. And this was not a procedure which Bach alone followed. It was part of the spirit of music of his times. We can find in the musical literature of that age many settings of the same chorale by different composers, even many by the same composer.

And we find the same process in jazz. In accompanying or setting a well known blues or other familiar tune, the impulse of the musician is to keep its feeling intact and add to it by throwing a contrasting melodic line around it, or to follow it with successive variations that do not twist the melody into a different feeling, but act as a sort of implied counterpoint to it.

It is not our purpose to urge swing fans to start a collection of Bach records. Two hundred years have passed; tunes are different, rhythms are different. But it takes little imagination to see that a gavotte or minuet, in Bach's day, served the purpose of a fox-trot today; that when Bach, in the Polonaise from the B Minor Suite, suddenly sets the flute dancing against the violins, he is looking for the same effect that Bechet and Nicholas get in their solos in the Jelly Roll "High Society"; that the blues hold much the same place in people's heart and mind today that the "chorales" and folk tunes had with the people Bach was writing for; that works such as the Jelly Roll performance of "I Thought I Heard Buddy Bolden Say", the Louis-Bessie "St. Louis Blues", the Oliver "St. James Infirmary", Basie's piano variations on "How Long Blues", are designed in the same manner as the Bach Chorale-Preludes, and for the same purpose.

We can find a great similarity between Bach and the jazzmen in their approach to musical instruments. In writing for the clavichord (the piano of his day), for instance, Bach simply adapted the vocal forms of his day, such as the accompanied song or the chorale-prelude, but thought it out in terms of the keyboard, making full use of the new resources it gave him. And boogie woogie did exactly the same thing in jazz. It is a simple adaptation of the accompanied blues, the jazz piano style nearest in feeling to the blues, and yet at the same time the most pianistic of jazz styles, making full use of the resources of the instrument. Again, in writing for solo violin, Bach kept the two-voice effect by having the violin play a melody and broken chords at the same time, which is exactly what Armstrong does in his trumpet solos.

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JAZZMEN ABROAD

by WALTER E. SCHAAP

PART THREE

Although years in Europe have had a deleterious effect on Coleman Hawkins, they have produced some fine work from at least two jazzmen who merit the adjective great. I refer to Benny Carter and Eddie South.

Carter's stay abroad almost coincides in time with that of Hawkins; he left a year later and returned a year before. Benny traded Harlem for England in 1935, joining up with Willy Lewis' outfit, which boasted such stars as Bill Coleman and Bobby Martin, trumpets; Herman Chittison, piano; and June Coles, bassist. Lewis' band, like many such colored combinations abroad, had the necessary instrumentalists but lacked the able arranging, and the orchestral drive, which are the requisites for a really first-rate orchestra. The addition of Benny Carter wiped out any deficiency on the first score, at least. Listen, for example, to Lewis' recording of "Star Dust", which contains a saxophone ensemble of the sort only Benny can write.

The story of Carter's meanderings in Europe, after his stay with Lewis, reads much like that of Hawkins'. He led diverse combinations and produced recordings in England and all along the western perophery of the Continent. During 1936 there were several recording sessions for the new English Vocalion swing series, with an all-star English combination including Tommy McQuater and Max Goldberg, trumpets, and Buddy Featherstonhaugh, tenor sax. Some of these sides, but not the best, have appeared on American Brunswick. Benny is featured on almost any instrument you could name -- trumpet, tenor and alto saxes, clarinet and piano--to say nothing of his services as vocalist, arranger, and usually composer as well. (It is wise to say nothing of his services as vocalist.) Although he had toyed with other instruments, he was still known chiefly as an alto saxophonist until he went abroad and cultivated his technique on trumpet, clarinet and tenor. The band doesn't swing, but when they get going on a slow number such as Benny's own lovely "Nightfall" or "Just A Mood", or his swell arrangement of "These Foolish Things", the result (which cannot by any stretch of the imagination be called hot jazz) is nevertheless delightful, and indeed memorable, music. On these discs, Benny's work on alto and especially clarinet is unsurpassable. Note how his clarinet style has changed since the days of the Chocolate Dandies' "Dee Blues"; here his solos are played in low register, with a round, full tone. I am afraid, however, that his trumpet work will never compare to his mastery of tone and technique on the reed instruments.

The guitarist, on one of these English sessions, was none other than Bernard Addison, who was touring Europe at the time as accompanist with the Mills Brothers. This same session featured an experiment with "Waltzin' The Blues", an idea of Leonard Feather's, I believe.

Leaving Great Britain, Carter recorded with Kai Ewan's orchestra in Denmark (H.M.V.), and with the Ramblers at Laren in Holland. Not all of these are listed in Discography. I have, for instance, a fine coupling by Bennie Carter and the Ramblers of "Blue Rhythm" and "New Street Swing" (Dutch Decca F42110). Both numbers were written by Dutch boys, and the first title has nothing in common with the old "Blue Rhythm" by King Carter and his Orchestra (Mills Blue Rhythm Band). Late in 1937, Carter led a combination, mostly English musicians including George Chisholm on trombone, at Scheveningen in Holland. At this time, the Hawk was playing in Amsterdam, and together with his pianist Freddy Johnson, he used to sit in on Carter's recording dates for English Vocalion.

In 1938, Benny switched his affections to Paris, where he was featured at "Le Boeuf sur le Toit". His recordings for the Swing label (issued here on Victor), "I'm Coming Virginia -- Blue Light Blues", were made there with a mixed pick-up band featuring Fletcher Allen, alto; Bertie King, clarinet; Alix Combelle, tenor, and Django Reinhardt, guitar. Both Allen (who had his own band at another Parisian boite) and King are American Negroes, and both take good solos on "Blue Light Blues". Benny plays trumpet in "Blue Light Blues", and alto in "Virginia" and also in "Farewell Blues" (Swing 36), a fine waxing of a Carter arrangement, made at the same session but issued too late for inclusion in Discography. Benny is also featured on the Hawkins All-Star Jam Band sides mentioned in our last installment.

Benny returned to New York in May 1938, and soon formed his present orchestra. To understand why we have termed Hawkins' European venture a failure, and Carter's a success, you have only to compare their European recordings, and the present work of their respective orchestras. Both personal and musical factors enabled Benny to escape the pitfalls of instrumental virtuosity which ensnared the Hawk. The main safety valve, we think, was his arranging ability, which made him the heart of his bands, not merely their head. Then, too, his versatility was sensational enough to obviate the need for demonstrating a bewildering technique on any one instrument.

* * *

In the case of Eddie South, we have one of our top-notch jazzmen whose best efforts on wax were recorded in Europe. Eddie, probably the greatest violinist of jazz, has a beautiful tone and an amazing technique on his instrument. The only thing he lacks is a purely hot temperament — he could be content playing semi-classical numbers. To get the best out of him, he must be supervised by a genuine hot addict. When Hugues Panassie got him to record for the Swing label in Paris, 1937, he made his earlier work for Victor look sick. And even Venuti is put to shame by South at his best.

But first let's get the historical part straight. Eddie's first foreign venture was a Paris stand, in 1928. Two numbers from that period, "Two Guitars" and "Doin' The Raccoon", have been preserved on wax by French Gramophone. Eddie returned to Paris in 1937, to lead a band at the International Exposition. He brought with him as pianist David Martin, one-time arranging partner of Edgar Sampson, who has lately been fronting his own band at the Saint George in Brooklyn. Martin's only recordings in France, however, were made with Alix Combelle, not South.

For his Swing session, South recorded two fine solos: "Eddie's Blues" and "Sweet Georgia Brown", choosing as his accompanists Django Reinhardt, whom he idolizes, and the American bassist Wilson Myers. Myers, incidentally, is the "Ernest Meyers" who played bass on the great New Orleans Feetwarmers date. He tells me that he learned the bull fiddle only the day before that memorable session, having been until then a guitarist.

Eddie joined with Stephane Grappelly of the H. C. F. Quintette to produce what are likely to remain the greatest hot violin duets ever, "Dinah" and "Daphne". Both of them know how to put the violin through its paces, and the entente between them, as when they answer each other's phrases in the final choruses, borders on the incredible. This same duet, with Django's backing, experimented with a Bach concerto, filling one side of the record with a straight improvisation, the other with a swing interpretation. Finally, Michel Warlop, another leading French fiddler, was added, and the violin trio made "Fiddle Blues" and "Lady Be Good" (Swing 54).

South and Martin returned to the U. S. on the same boat as Carter, in May 1938. Since then Eddie has led his orchestra in various cities, but nothing has yet been done to rescue this great jazz violinist from comparative obscurity.

NEW RECORDS

MUGGSY SPANIER'S Ragtime Band (BB 10506) Dipper Mouth Blues — I Wish I Could Shimmy Like My Sister Kate. Muggsy Spanier, cornet; George Brunies, trombone; Rod Cless, clarinet; Bernie Billings, tenor sax; Joe Bushkin, piano; Bob Casey, bass; Don Carter, drums.

For its first recording date in New York, Muggsy Spanier's band is a little changed. Joe Bushkin had replaced George Zack again on piano; Marty Greenberg was replaced by that fine drummer Don Carter; and, less important, Bernie Billings was on tenor sax in place of Ray McKinstry.

Muggsy, Cless and Brunies, however, are the nucleus of the band, and the music sounds much the same. The main difference seems to be that Brunies, encouraged by finding himself in home territory again (at Nick's), has become a bit more rambunctious; and these two sides have a little more of that old-fashioned bounce that George gives out. Otherwise, they're as fine as the four Muggsy made in Chicago.

Both tunes are taken slightly faster than you might expect, and the relaxed ensemble moves easily above this fast, steady rhythm. The solos and all-ins are good: Dipper Mouth, especially, features Cless in a beautiful version of Johnny Dodds' famous solo, and Muggsy plays the King Oliver muted chorus very authentically. (Compare this with Rex Stewart's playing in the Henderson Dipper Mouth (Sugar Foot), reviewed elsewhere in this issue.)

Joe Bushkin, though his Stacian piano is less appropriate to this kind of music than was Zack's fine rolling style, turns in an inspired chorus. On the other side Brunies takes full charge, singing an easy vocal and filling the whole record with his slightly comic spirit. Notice the lift with which Muggsy takes off after Brunies' "Oh boy", and Bushkin's good solo.

As we said of Muggsy's previous Bluebirds, there's room for improvement in the band; but no praise could be too great for the spirit in which it takes its jazz, or for its two leading musicians, Spanier (who could play even better with a more satisfactory backing) and Rod Cless (who is much more at home in these sides than in the last four, where he sounded stiff and ill at ease).

BUD FREEMAN and the Summa Cum Laude Orchestra (De 2849) Sunday — As Long As I Live. Max Kaminsky, cornet; Brad Gowans, valve trombone; Pee Wee Russell, clarinet; Bud Freeman, tenor sax; Dave Bowman, piano; Eddie Condon, guitar; Clyde Newcomb, bass; Al Seidel, drums.

At best, cum laude; certainly not summa. All the talent in this band is under wraps; Maxie, because he isn't given the spotlight position his present ability deserves; Pee Wee, because he just doesn't play with the verve which once made him great; Bud, because he no longer plays the same kind of music as the rest of the boys. Outside of that, there are Brad Gowans, whose peculiar arrangements are instrumental in setting the band's style; Dave Bowman, who's a good pianist but no more than that, and a weak rhythm section which Condon's fine strumming can only partly save.

Those are a few reasons why this new record isn't too reminiscent of the "Chicago style" of Muggsy and Tesch, PacPartland and Sullivan. Unpleasant comparisons aside, however, and considering the commercial nature of the date, the music is pleasant, with some fair solo spots. Pee Wee's solo on the second side sounds best.

FLETCHER HENDERSON and his Orchestra (Varsity 8052) Sugar Foot Stomp -- Blue Rhythm. Russell Smith, Rex Stewart, Bobby Stark, trumpets; J. C. Higginbotham, Claude Jones, trombones; Edgar Sampson, Russell Procope, Coleman Hawkins, reeds; Fletcher Henderson, piano; Clarence Holiday, guitar; John Kirby, bass; Walter Johnson, drums.

The one good side made for Crown by Fletcher Henderson's orchestra has finally turned up among Varsity's reissues of Crown masters. It is Sugar Foot Stomp, already reissued by the Hot Record Society. We might note that there's some doubt about the personnel of this record. The first trombone solo was played by Claude Jones; the grand second solo has been variously attributed to Jones, Jimmy Harrison, Bennie Morton and J. C. Higginbotham. But it sounds like Higgy to us, and we'll stick by that until proof to the contrary is offered. Other good solos are by Rex, playing his version of King Oliver's traditional chorus; and, at the end, Coleman Hawkins. The coupling is as poor as the other Crown Hendersons.

JELLY ROLL MORTON'S Red Hot Peppers (BB 8302) Strokin' Away -- Low Gravy. Ward Pinkard, trumpet; Gueechy Fields, trombone; Albert Nicholas, clarinet; Jelly Roll Morton, piano; Howard Hill, guitar; unknown tuba; Paul Barbarin, drums.

Again concealed on the Bluebird race list comes another valuable reissue. These sides were made at the same date as Blue Blood Blues and Mushmouth Shuffle (on July 14, 1930), and the first, especially, shares many of the fine qualities of Blue Blood Blues. The tune and arrangement are excellent, and all the solos good. Albert Nicholas plays a clarinet solo very reminiscent of his work in Blue Blood, beginning in a slightly halting low register and then attacking with a high, clear tone; his work in the ensembles is also fine. Special attention ought to be given to the trumpeter, Ward Pinkard, whose superb playing on various Jelly Roll records has caused him to be mistaken for numerous more famous musicians. He plays with great, but controlled, heat, and his tone has a fine edge. His simple, driving

(Continued on Page 6)

H. R. S.

VICTOR
COLUMBIA
BRUNSWICK
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REPRESSINGS

RECORDINGS BY
AMERICA'S LEADING RACE ARTISTS

827 SEVENTH AVENUE H. R. S. RECORD SHOP NEW YORK CITY

NEW RECORDS

(Continued from Page 5)

style, with Nicholas' punctilious, note-splitting clarinet, gives the ensembles great energy. On the reverse Nicholas, as he did in Mushmouth Shuffle, turns in a weak job on a written solo.

The personnel for this date, as listed above, was obtained from Nicholas by John D. Reid of Victor. The trombone, however, sounds very unlike the Gueechy Fields who recorded with Morton and Pinkard on Shoe Shiner's Drag, Georgia Swing, Kansas City Stomps and Boogaboo, only two years before. Jelly Roll himself says that Fields and Pinkard always played together, except that on one date Fields could not be present, and was replaced by Wilbur De Paris. Possibly Nicholas' memory was at fault, and De Paris played trombone on this record.

BENNY GOODMAN'S Orchestra (Co 353-01) Boy Meets Horn -- Let's Dance. This has happened before: the best Goodman record in a long time is a straight imitation of Ellington. Boy Meets Horn is the witty number Rex Stewart plays with the Duke, and Chris Griffin, following Rex closely, turns in a good job. The coupling is the famous theme of the Goodman band, finally preserved on wax.

BOB CROSBY'S Orchestra (De 2848) Boogie Woogie Maxixe -- High Society. The b. w. Maxixe is of little interest; and as for High Society, we'll take (among others) the old version by some of the Crosby boys issued on Champion and Decca under the name of the Mound City Blue Blowers. The new version has a bit too much brass, and the traditional clarinet counterpoint is missing. There's a nice piano chorus against unison clarinets, though; and Fazola, playing his version of the Picou solo, abandons his excessively sweet tone quite appropriately, and to good effect.

ERSKINE HAWKINS and his Orchestra (BB 10506) Uptown Shuffle --- More Than You Know. Erskine Hawkins, Sam Lowe, Wilbur Bascombe, Marcellus Green, trumpets; Robert Raye, Edward Sims, trombones; William Johnson, Haywood Henry, James Mitchell, Julius Dash, saxes; Avery Parrish, piano; William McLemore, guitar; L. Stanfield, bass; James Morrison, drums.

This band has often been called "underrated"; but it could easily be overrated, too. Uptown Shuffle is a good big-band arrangement, not too original, well played except for a few trumpet shrieks at the end. Most interesting spots are Parrish's piano solo (in which he pays his respects to Mary Lou Williams) and an excellent alto chorus, credited by the Victor release to Julius Dash.

BOB ZURKE'S Delta Rhythm Band (Vi 26420) Peach Tree Street -- Fit To Be Tied. The first side is an unsuccessful attempt, by arranger Fud Livingston, to recapture the spirit of the old Teagarden blues records. Sterling Bose handles the singing, but does better in his trumpet solo. Zurke's piano gets a curious resemblance to the sound of washing clothes.

ROY ELDRIDGE'S Orchestra (Varsity 8107) Pluckin' The Bass -- Gettin' Sentimental Over You. Roy Eldridge, Robert Williams, trumpets; Eli Robinson, trombone; Prince Robinson, Joe Eldridge, Franz Jackson, saxes; Clyde Hart, piano; John Collins, guitar; Ted Sturgis, bass; David Francis, drums.

These are sad. Gettin' Sentimental has a fair Laurel Watson vocal and rather undecided trumpeting. Pluckin' The Bass is a "hot" arrangement, featuring heavy string bass against monotonous drumming, and some tasteless ensembles. Roy's trumpet here is at its uncontrolled worst. Tenor (Robinson) and clarinet (Jackson) are not heard to much advantage.

HARRY "FREDDIE" SHAYNE (De 7663) Original Mr. Freddie Blues — Lonesome Man Blues. Of special interest to collectors is this Decca race item, repressed from Champion masters. Shayne, composer of the famous Mr. Freddie Blues, plays and sings this and another composition in good style. His voice is not particularly well adapted to blues but he handles it well; and his piano, with its simple left hand figures and pleasant rock, is well worth attention.

BENNY CARTER'S Orchestra (Vo 5324) Love's Got Me Down Again--Vagabond Dreams. Benny Carter, alto sax and trumpet; Joe Thomas, Eddie Mullens, Link Mills, trumpets; Tyree Glenn, trombone; Jimmy Powell, Carl Frye, Ernie Powell, Cass McCord, saxes; Eddie Heywood, piano; Ulysses Livingston, guitar; Hayes Alvis, bass; Keg Purnell, drums.

We mention these two commercial sides by way of indicating that Mr. Carter has a very smooth, well behaved band for this kind of performance. The first side is better, and spots a few of the soloists.

YAS YAS GIRL and her Jazz Boys (Vo 05219) Don't Have To Sing The Blues -- I Need You By My Side. Merline Johnson does two blues vocals in a fairly good, rather masculine voice, with accompaniment by good trumpet, sax, piano, guitar and an interesting vocal bass.

HOT CLUB OF FRANCE QUINTET (Royale 1785, 1788) Ultrafox — Swanee River; Confessin' -- Smoke Rings. Stephane Grappelly, violin; Django Reinhardt, solo guitar; Roger Chaput, Joseph Reinhardt, guitars; Louis Vola, bass. On the last title the Quintet is augmented by Arthur Briggs, Pierre Allier, Alphonse Cox, trumpets; Eugene D'Hellemmes, trombone.

More reissues from Ultraphone, these four sides by the Quintet are no more interesting than those already issued. Django, who is a better improviser than jazz musician, doesn't get much chance to shoe his talents, and Grappelly's fiddling is too prominent. The best side is Confessin', which is smooth and pleasant, in the popular vein.

COLLECTORS' ITEMS

(Continued from Page 2)

of the Five Musical Blackbirds, on Pathe 7508: 18th Street Rag. Coupling is Great Scott, by the Troy Harmonists. This might easily line up with the Ada Brown Break O' Day Blues -- Evil Mamma Blues, also on Pathe with Moten accompaniment. Can someone supply numbers for these three sides?

The Perfect issue of Ellington's Rockin' In Rhythm -- Twelfth Street Rag, under the Louisiana Rhythmakers pseudonym, is No. 15650, a number of correspondents inform us. Another unlisted Perfect reissue is Andy Kirk's Mary's Idea -- Once Or Twice (originally Brunswick 48-63), under the name of Duke Wilson and his Ten Black Berries, on Perfect 15697.

Walter Trumbley of East St. Louis has Crazy Blues -- The Stuff Is Here And It's Mellow, by Eva Taylor and her Boy Friends, on Melotone M-13228. There's no sign of Miss Taylor on the record, but he hears Ed Allen, trumpet; Willie (The Lion) Smith, piano; and, less certainly, Cecil Scott, clarinet; John Kirby, bass, and Billy Banks, vocal, as well as an excellent trombone.

Grover Sales, president of the Boston Hot Jazz Club, sends us a list of records not mentioned in Discography. Has anyone information on Oriole 674, Louisville Washboard Band's I've Found A New Baby (361) coupled with Dixie Jazz Band's Deep Henderson (362)? Who's the trumpet in Eddie Heywood's Jazz Trio, accompanying Butterbeans and Susie in Gonna Make You Sorry (81065), Okeh 8556? He adds two Ma Raineys on Paramount, with Lovie Austin accompaniment: 12080, Bo-Weavil Blues (1597) -- Last Minute Blues (1609) and 12083, Southern Blues (1612)--Moonshine Blues (1608). According to George Avakian, Tommy Ladnier said he played on Southern Blues, which makes it likely that he also accompanied Ma Rainey on Walking Blues (1613), Paramount 12082.

Incidentally, there's also a New Bo-Weavil Blues — Moonshine Blues, Paramount 12603, by Ma Rainey and her Georgia Band.

Sales also adds a Will Ezell accompaniment for Elzadie Robinson, Whiskey Blues (376) -- Back Door

Blues (375), Paramount 12509. He has the Allen-Hawkins My Galveston Gal -- You're Gonna Lose Your Gal, on Perfect 15851, and the Henry Allen Smooth Sailing --- Whose Honey Are You on Banner 33355. Also the Duke Ellington East St. Louis Toodle-Oo -- Jubilee Stomp on Perfect 14962 (same as the Cameo-Actuelle) and Henderson's Charlie My Boy (55-70) on Regal 9680. Ben Pollack's If I Could Be With You (19819), which has been issued on Romeo, Perfect, Regal, Domino, and Commodore, he also finds on Jewel 5998; and Bill Riddle of Baltimore has the same side on Banner 0747.Not to mention the Oriole 1998 issue, which Discography omits.

Eugene Benyas of Harvard writes that he has a blues record by Carl Martin, I'm Gonna Have My Fun (90-635), on Champion 50074, on which the piano accompaniment is credited to Chuck Segar. This makes it seem unlikely, after all, that the Decca piano solos by Charlie Segar are the anonymous work of Cow Cow Davenport. Is there any other evidence to indicate that Segar is an actual name, not a pseudonym? The Deccas, by the way, are: Cuban Villa Blues --- Southern Hospitality, 7027, and Boogie Woogie -- Cow Cow Blues, 7075.

John M. Krom of Malba, Long Island, asks about Brunswick 4244, the Rhythm Aces' Jazz Battle. This is the well-known Jabbo Smith record reissued by the U.H.C.A. (No. 43-44), and featuring Jabbo, trumpet; Omer Simeon, clarinet; Fraser, piano; Ikey Robinson, banjo; Hayes Alvis, bass. We have no personnel for the reverse, It's Tight Like That, by Walter Barnes' Royal Creolians; but hasn't it been printed somewhere?

Merrill M. Hammond Jr., Worcester, Mass., provides an addition to the Clarence Williams discography: Okeh 8107, accompaniment for Margaret Johnson, If I Let You Get Away With It (972) and E Flat Blues (973). No Armstrong on these, but the first side has the greatest Bechet blues chorus ever recorded, in Mr. Hammond's opinion.

Paul B. Sheatsley of Mountain Lakes, N. J., straightens out the mistake in the Kirk section in Hot Discography, as follows: Saturday, on Brunswick 6027, is coupled with a tune called Sophomore which, he says, is pretty commercial, but has sixteen bars of Mary Lou and solos by tenor and trombone. Kirk's Dallas Blues was issued on Brunswick 6129, coupled with Noble Sissle's Basement Blues.

Don Bissing, of Hays, Kansas, wants the personnel of A Bag Of Blues, by Jack Pettis and his Pets, Victor 21793. Other readers have also requested personnels on the various Pettis records.

Who is Trombone Red and his Blue Six, on Columbia 14612-D, Greasy Plate Stomp -- B Flat Blues?

READERS' COMMENTS

Chicago, November 29

Gentlemen:

In your record reviews of November 24 you speak of Decca 7662 by the Virginia Four as the funniest race record in a long time and that "four men harmonizing about their jelly-roll, instead of shortnin' bread, sound very strange." As a matter of fact, the old Norfolk Jazz Quartet sang in exactly the same style, and one of their most famous recordings, the "Jelly Roll Blues", was almost the same as to wording, style, etc., as "Dig My Jelly Roll" by the Virginia Four.

The old Norfolk Jazz Quartet number was released on Okeh in 1922, when I was peddling records from house to house in my hometown in Kansas after school at night, and was one of my best sellers. They also made several other records using this hot style without instrumental accompaniment, then I lost track of them. I am wondering if the Virginia Four aren't perhaps the Norfolk group re-appearing under a new name since both groups are identified with the same geographical section as well as style.

Frank Marshall Davis

New York, November 23

Gentlemen:

I read with great dissatisfaction your review of Coleman Hawkins' new record in the current issue of JAZZ INFORMATION. Please understand that I am not such a rabid Hawkins fan that I believe all of his work to be beyond reproach, but permit me, as a student of hot jazz and a musician of sorts (tenor sax, clarinet and piano) to say that you were unjustified in referring to his improvisations as "sterile" and "meaningless"; and in saying that he played with a "strained and monstrous, squeaky sort of tone".

I must admit that he didn't play an inspired tenor on the slow side for the most part, but did you catch the introduction? Whether premeditated or spontaneous, it was very fine from the standpoint of both originality and execution. His work on the fast side, however, was creative and inspiring throughout. And what a ride-out! But what I am really at a loss to understand is the basis upon which you so firmly denounced his tone. It is neither squeaky nor strained — it is a big tone, rough to be sure, but wasy and full of great warmth. It may be that your rash judgment of his tone was occasioned by an aversion to change -- the normal reaction of a conservative. A great many critics make this same mistake, because they judge the new efforts of a musician in the light of his past performances rather than according to the performances of his contemporaries.

If you study the work of a musician over a period of years, you will find that his tone usually undergoes certain changes, evolutionary in character. These changes are not brought about by conscientious effort, but are the result of physical alterations which all of us must undergo. Compare, for example, the earlier work of such musicians as Bud Freeman, Tommy Ladnier and Muggsy Spanier with their latest efforts, and these changes in tone become quite obvious. These changes do not imply that their tones have deteriorated, but that they have simply been modified in some respect. There are no standards by which we can judge the authenticity or value of any particular tone -- jazz is music which affords great freedom for self-expression through the use of a variety of tones as well as a variety of styles. Your dislike for a rough tone is not shared by a great many jazz enthusiasts (do you like Pee Wee Russell's tone?), for they feel that a rough tone lends itself superbly to a hot performance.

JAZZ INFORMATION answers a real purpose. Congratulations.

David B. Caughren, Jr.

(EDITORS' NOTE: Justification of our Hawkins opinion must be postponed; but we assert most firmly that we have nothing against the rough tone, and that we are not opposed to the passage of time.)

London, October 29

Dear Sirs,

I have, for many years, been a collector of American swing records on the original American labels.

Now that there is a war here, however, it is no longer possible to obtain international money orders, so that I am unable to order these discs any more from the New York record shops, as has been my custom.

I am, however, anxious to continue receiving these platters, so would you be so good as to send me the name and address of an American swing music lover, who would be willing to exchange discs with me? He could send me the new American issues that I require, and in re-

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FROM BACH TO JAZZ

(Continued from Page 3)

It would be foolish, of course, to say that jazz music as it is today will figure as large in the history of music as the work of Bach, or anywhere near it. Bach was one of the most consummate masters of music, a great and profound composer, who not only improvised and liked an occasional jam session on the harpsichord or organ, but knew how to build a tremendous and complex musical structure.

The point of the comparison, rather, is to indicate that good jazz, while authentically American in its melodies, rhythms and tone colors, belongs in the tradition of great music. It is one of the beginnings and renewals of music that have always taken place whenever the people of a country have tried to create a music authentically their own. It is, moreover, one of the healthiest movements in modern music. It marks a return to a type of music in which composers and audience can meet on equal ground, speaking a language familiar to both of them. It marks a return to the realistic, earthy spirit of music in Bach's time, as opposed to the chest-beating attitude of most 19th century composers. It is still in its infancy, but its possibilities are limitless.

READERS' COMMENTS

(Continued from Page 7)

turn I would send him some of the many swell discs that are in the British lists, but not in the American.

...In this war weary country, I get the greatest enjoyment from reading American papers, especially interesting, unbiased ones like yours.

Michael J. Butcher
32 Penberth Road
Catford
London S. E. 6
England

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